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# How Informality Can Play Out in European Integration

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## **Abstract**

This concluding chapter argues that the ambition to study informality more systematically should not be allowed to obscure the fact that historians have often already looked into informal aspects of European integration, but refrained from claiming it openly. The point is thus not to *start* studying informal aspects of European integration, but instead to do it consciously, explicitly, and systematically. Based on the various contributions in this volume as well as further historiographical examples, this chapter surveys the ways in which informality can be defined, then provides some examples where informality can already be found in the historiography of postwar European cooperation and integration, appraises how the chapters in this volume can be categorised, and finally explores what this can indicate for future research.

*Keywords: Informality, Formality, Codification, European integration, historiography, primary sources, biography, prosopography*

*'For more than forty years I've been talking prose without any idea of it; I'm very much obliged to you for telling me that.'*

Monsieur Jourdain<sup>1</sup>

Molière's *The Bourgeois Gentleman* gently satirises the personality of Monsieur Jourdain, a foolish and naive middle-class man who is trying to become an aristocrat. Jourdain secretly loves a woman and would like to write her a note in which he wants to display his erudition in the humanities in order to charm her. Foolish and naive as he is, Jourdain is unable to write such a letter on his own, and seeks the help of a writer. In explaining to Jourdain the various stylistic approaches one can employ in a letter, the writer makes Jourdain discover that, all summed up, there are only two ways to write a text: in *verse* or in *prose*. How proud is the fatuous Jourdain to realise that he had been speaking *prose* for ages without even knowing it!

Researching informality for a historian of postwar European cooperation and integration seems akin to using prose for Monsieur Jourdain: you do it without even knowing it. What historian would seriously contest the significance of the personal ties fostered among leaders – the de Gaulle-Adenauer entente, the Schmidt-Giscard friendship, or the Thatcher-Reagan understanding? What historian would contest the role played by the Monnet network – to name only the most obvious case – in developing early plans for the integration of Western Europe? What historian would reasonably challenge the view that contacts outside traditional diplomatic channels help smoothen out tensions in international relations? Historians that do not challenge these views are studying informality without even knowing it!

While researching informality is certainly valuable, challenging, and rewarding, I argue in this chapter that the ambition to study informality more systematically should not be allowed

to obscure the fact that historians have often already looked into informal aspects of European integration, but refrained from claiming it openly. The point is thus not to *start* studying informal aspects of European integration, but instead to do it consciously, explicitly, and systematically. In the following pages, based on the various contributions in this volume as well as further historiographical examples, I survey the ways in which informality can be defined, then provide some examples where informality can already be found in the historiography of postwar European cooperation and integration, appraise how the chapters in this volume can be categorised, and finally explore what this can indicate for future research.

### **Defining and providing evidence of informality**

What exactly constitutes informality? On the face of it, informality is easy to define. A quick look at any dictionary tells us that ‘informal’ means having a relaxed, friendly, or unofficial nature. Taking this into account, examples of formality and informality taken from the broad field of international history easily spring to mind: an official state dinner after a summit will clearly be formal, while an unplanned conversation on the margins of this same dinner could be considered informal.

Difficulties arise as soon as we delve into the details of defining informality. At least one contradiction and one confusion seem to exist. First, in the introduction, the editors mention that “informality is not without its rules”.<sup>2</sup> This statement points at one potential inner contradiction in the concept of informality. If informality has its rules, this means then that informality can have a degree of... formality. The two concepts are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Second, the definition of what is actually informal is at times confusing. In the introduction, the editors explain that informality “goes beyond what treaties provide”. This means that custom – the established general practice as opposed to the written clauses of a treaty, a contract or binding agreement – would thus be informal according to the editors.

True, custom is by definition not *formally* codified. But custom, at least as a source of law, can come with a sense of legal obligation that makes its respect very formal: it is a rule that must be obeyed.<sup>3</sup> The formal/informal distinction seems thus rather blurred.

Confusion and contradiction also come from the fact that, at times, it appears as if good rhetoric could easily label the same phenomenon as 'formal' or 'informal.' For instance, chapter 3 by Ludlow mentions the European Council as initially informal. It is true that the European Council was not labelled as an EEC institution until the Treaty of Lisbon. In that understanding, 'formal' and 'informal' seem to be used synonymously with 'codified' and 'uncodified'. It would be easy to argue the opposite, however. The Treaty of Lisbon did not provide 'a formal recognition' to the European Council in the sense that the European Council ceased to be *informal*. The Treaty of Lisbon provided a long-awaited degree of *codification* in the EU Treaty to the progressive rise of the European Council as a full-fledged institution. Until then, the European Council was functioning following an established *custom* that was very formal, if uncodified, and akin to the British way of having an unwritten constitution.

What is the basis of the European Council's existence?<sup>4</sup> A press communiqué that was published by the EEC heads of state and government in December 1974, after a summit meeting, served as the European Council's founding text. This communiqué is posterior to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and not incorporated into it. Is this communiqué codified, in the continental legal sense of the term? No. Has this basis been amended after 1974? Yes, quite frequently. In June 1977, the so-called London declaration set out in more detail the ordinary functioning of European Council meetings (organisation of the preparation, attendance, expected outcomes). The 1981 London report on European Political Cooperation (EPC) confirmed the role of the European Council in the EPC. The 1983 Stuttgart Solemn Declaration formalised the regular visit of the European Council's president

at the European Parliament once a year. In addition to the December 1974 communiqué, these three texts created a basis for the functioning of the European Council that was not legally binding, not codified in a treaty, but that all participants respected and *perceived* as binding. This type of arrangement was new and different from the traditional legal continental practice of Treaty-based processes in European integration. All European Council participants highly valued the informality of the European Council's settings. Where then did this valued informality exactly lie? In that the European Council provided a forum where heads of government could hold informal – that is, non-binding – exchanges of views. The agenda of the meeting was not set in stone, and the discussions were not officially kept on record. But it is equally hard to see this as completely informal either: all actors involved in European cooperation processes perceived the European Council as an integral part of the EEC institutional machinery, regardless of its Treaty status. The European Council is thus a good example of the difficulty to draw a clear line between what is formal, and what is informal.

More recently, the EU itself has started using officially the very expression of 'informal European Council' in its present day parlance. Such informal European Councils take place on a regular basis in Brussels, with all EU members. One of the latest of those informal European Councils took place on 23 February 2018 and focused on institutional issues, the next multiannual financial framework (MFF), and international problems. Where did the informality of the meeting then lie? Essentially in the absence of written conclusions.

Further complicating the matter, definitions of informality seem to be prone to a high degree of variable geometry. The single word 'informal' covers so many different situations that it does not seem to have much homogeneity as a concept. The introduction to this volume points out, for instance, that informality can, but does not necessarily take place in hidden spheres. So when is the informal hidden, and when is it not? There does not seem to be any

hard and fast rule for identifying and quantifying the informal in that regard (and this is certainly not something to blame the editors for), and we are in some respects left with a fairly nebulous characterisation of what is informal. Or, to put it differently: the definition of informality is not very clear-cut.

This partly nebulous definition of informality is due to the fact that informality covers very heterogeneous phenomena. Informality can happen on the margins of an official meeting, or during an unplanned encounter. Research on informality can encompass – as the contributions to this volume show – unofficial contacts between companies and the European Commission, as much as meetings of the G7. I will discuss below the examples of informality provided in this volume, and add a few more.

Once informality has been identified, how to provide evidence of it? Chapters 1 and 2 of this volume discuss that the source base is not necessarily different from that used when providing evidence of formal arrangements. Any good historical research in international relations and European integration should be looking for and using the items mentioned in the two chapters, such as records of meetings, and oral history. This does not differ significantly from the source base used in research that avowedly looks at formal aspects only. To carry on using the example of the European Council, if we stick to the categorisation provided by the above-mentioned authors, that is, that the European Council was informal until the 2007 Lisbon Treaty, and became formal after 2007, I do not quite see how this will change the historian's quest for evidence. Any historian working on a European Council will want to find a record of the meeting, preparatory notes, records of bilateral preparatory meetings, internal notes produced within the Council of Ministers and European Council, possibly notes (if they existed at all, and have been preserved) of a behind-the-scenes encounter, oral history interviews of witnesses, and memoirs.

Is the similarity in the source base a problem? It can become one, as it flattens a methodological challenge that is in reality common to any historical research. It is certainly true that the challenge of finding a source is more tangible and acute when looking at informal aspects rather than formal ones. With regard to the example of the European Council, records of meetings are for instance sparse. This means that looking *systematically* for the informal dimension in these summits is difficult, but possible, as I myself tried to show in my research on the European Council.<sup>5</sup> This problem boils down to the same perennial methodological challenge with which any historian is confronted: to look for the best possible piece of evidence; to compare, contrast, and interrogate all accessible sources.

Finally, evidence for informal dimensions of European cooperation and integration can be found beyond archival material and oral history. When looking for informality, biographies and/or prosopography can also provide valuable insights. At least two examples taken from the historiography related to European integration and international history can illuminate this. First, Katja Seidel's *The Process of Politics in Europe*, while looking at bureaucracy – a very formal administrative aspect of European integration – also unearthed informal aspects through the study of biographies and the prosopography of Commission officials. Seidel's analysis highlights, for instance, how Secretary-General Emile Noël managed to expand his tasks beyond the formal remit of his secretariat; how multiple networks (such as political parties and trade unions) alongside member states tried to influence the Commission's early administration; and finally how the officials lived and socialised in Brussels.<sup>6</sup> Second, and in a similar vein, my own prosopography of the G7 sherpas – the most senior diplomatic advisors to a head of government participating in a G7 meeting – highlights some formal and informal trends among another bureaucratic group of people. For instance, the recruitment of a specific type of profile for the position of sherpa may not be following a pattern that is



subject to official, formal rules, but instead informal aspects. Prosopography allows to trace these career trajectories and identify such informal developments. The important difference between the case of the European Commission and the sherpas is that the former was a formally identified bureaucracy as such, while the latter was merely a clearly delineated, but unofficial group of top-level advisors.

### **Claiming or not claiming informality**

The scepticism displayed in some of my remarks above is certainly not to deny the importance of researching informality. Rather, my apparent scepticism highlights that while studying the informal may indeed be more challenging than researching the formal – as Roos and Neuhold put it in chapter 2 – I think that this is only a marginal factor in explaining the existence of relatively few works published on informality in European integration. Very often, the informal will have been part and parcel of academic publications otherwise seemingly focused on the formal. It is true that some obvious cases suggest that the informal has indeed little place in the historical analysis of the EEC. Milward's *European Rescue of the Nation State* may be the most stereotypical example.<sup>7</sup> But a close look at many other publications, looking at different policy areas and different actors, highlights that the formal and the informal are regularly closely intertwined in historical research.

At the general level of EEC policymaking, Ludlow's *European Community and the Crises of the 1960s* deals for example with a variety of informal arrangements, and weaves the formal and the informal into one single coherent analysis.<sup>8</sup> When Ludlow recounts how the Five tried to persuade the French government to return to the Council, he describes many informal tactics. Ludlow talks of “institutional flexibility”, which by definition underscores the informal interpretation of formal rules.<sup>9</sup> Later, when Ludlow deals with the definition of the

new EEC agenda after the completion of the customs union ahead of schedule, he writes: “Many in Brussels were therefore turning their attention to the Community’s future agenda rather than being exclusively focused on the implementation of its first, treaty-defined, tasks”.<sup>10</sup> Following the editors’ definition of informality, since European policymakers were looking beyond the treaties, this agenda-setting activity can be considered informal. A further example of informality could be found in the role attributed to the West German government in brokering between the EEC and the UK government: Ludlow describes Bonn’s behaviour as that of an “uncomfortable mediator”.<sup>11</sup> This, too, can be considered as an informal activity, beyond and above formal diplomatic channels.

Informality no less regularly crops up in studies looking at the involvement of business circles in European cooperation and integration. Rollings and Kipping thus highlighted the role of the Council of European Industrial Federations (CEIF), which acted as a

“multilateral arena for the exchange of information and for building trust among the business people of various European countries, and, from 1958 onward, helped bridge the divide between those inside and those outside the Common Market”.<sup>12</sup>

This depiction clearly fits the editors’ definition of informality. Rollings’ *British Business in the Formative Years of European Integration* displays the wide array of views of British business towards Europe, and multiple ways of making their voice informally heard (or not).<sup>13</sup> One case in point is Rollings’ argument that “peak-level business organizations played a crucial role as intermediaries between government and the wider business community”.<sup>14</sup> In all the above cases, the authors do not claim, and per force conceptualise, this informal dimension.

EMU debates were equally prone to informal connections, although again the historians writing on EMU did not automatically claim this dimension. The pilot study on the Werner Committee network carried out by Düring, Danescu and Heimbach is a case in point.<sup>15</sup> The authors studied the correspondence among the members of the group, based on a limited sample of 51 items. These items were coded with regard to a number of characteristics, amongst others the “type of exchange”. The authors entered three options: official, non-official, and other. This clearly leaves space for ‘informal’ relations in correspondence. The authors did not, however, formally conceptualise this possible type of informal relations, as two further examples show. First, another column in their coding scheme looks at the “quality of relation”, ranging from “official-weak” through “official-strong” to “obligation”. In that range of options, the informal seems to have disappeared. Second, in their conclusions, the authors mention the “need to broaden the selection of documents in general and to include confidential exchanges in particular”. Would such “confidential exchanges” qualify as ‘informal’? In sum, while the informal dimension is not fully fleshed out, it is not absent from their pilot analysis either. This case thus qualifies the observation of the editors of this volume according to which the coherent analysis of the informal is absent from much historical research on European integration. But it vindicates at the same time their call for defining, discussing, and conceptualising informality in this research.

Still in the EMU realm, my own *Europe Made of Money* is heavily focused on a whole range of informal relations that played a central role in the run-up to the creation of the European Monetary System (EMS). By contrast to the above-mentioned cases, I explicitly name these informal relations as such, although I do not conceptualise informality and formality.<sup>16</sup> Such informality materialises in the slow formation of a consensus among monetary experts, often achieved through mutual visits and exchange of information rather than just formal meetings. It most famously occurred in the 1978 creation of the – informal – ‘group of three’ civil

servants (Bernard Clappier, Ken Couzens, and Horst Schulman) who drafted most of what would become the constitution of the EMS, outside of all regular diplomatic channels and controls. Informality crops up when analysing the conversations of heads of government during European Council meetings, as well as in reflecting on the role of the newly formed institution on the EEC's institutional setup.

Finally, and more broadly, the historiography related to the 'hidden integration' of Europe also indirectly and implicitly touches upon the issue of informal integration. European integration is often presented as a political process, as Ludlow discusses for instance in chapter 3 of this volume, although he mentions the political merely in opposition to the economic. In order to move away from political integration, Misa and Schot present European integration as "an emergent outcome of a process of linking and delinking of infrastructures, as well as the circulation and appropriation of artefacts, systems and knowledge".<sup>17</sup> Instead of the political, Misa and Schot focus on technology as a way to integrate Europe, beyond borders, and before and after the founding of the multiple European communities. Was this process informal? At one level it surely was not: such integration was taking place through very formal means, including contracts, building of infrastructures, international cooperation agreements, and licenses. But with respect to the nature of the European integration process, its non-official, non-politically-driven nature – at least in the eyes of these two authors – could well be considered informal. By being 'hidden', this type of integration of Europe leaves the classic framework of formal interstate bargaining. This strand of research moves the focus away from the classic and mostly formal units of analysis of postwar European cooperation and integration, namely, the nation, the state, and the government.

In sum, many academic authors, like Monsieur Jourdain using prose, study the informal without even knowing it. And most importantly for the purposes of gauging the numbers of

works devoted to the informal dimensions of European integration, these authors do so without *claiming* it.

## **Finding and categorising informality**

When looking for the informal, where can we expect to trace it? In exploring where researchers could hope to find ‘the informal’, Roos and Neuhold explain in chapter 2 that informality emerges in three types of contexts: during negotiations and agenda-setting; in decision-making procedures; and in the implementation of adopted policies.<sup>18</sup> The examples taken from the historiography that I mentioned above certainly all highlight these different stages. Rollings highlights how British business fed into the UK government’s agenda-setting. Ludlow shows the surprising flexibility of both national and EEC decision-making procedures in times of crisis. I stress in *A Europe Made of Money* the centrality of uncodified practices in EEC negotiations on monetary matters.

The chapters in this volume equally highlight each of these stages. The chapters by Steehouder and Van den Berg, by Zamburlini, and by Lehmann focus more clearly on the negotiations and agenda-setting part. Schade’s contribution centres on decision-making procedures. Venditti’s as well as Avril’s analyses look into both decision-making procedures and the implementation of adopted policies. Shehu’s and Lopez Gomez’ chapters both cover all three aspects.

In looking for the informal through the lens of the contributions to this volume, it seems to me that another, different but not antithetical, typology emerges. In addition to looking at particular stages in the policy process, the contributions to this volume highlight that informality can happen under different circumstances and contexts, that could be summarised

as brokering, democratic control and human rights, and the development of new institutional practices.

### *Brokering*

Brokering – that is, acting as an intermediary in a process to reach a goal – crops up explicitly and implicitly in Lehmann's contribution, as well as in Avril's, and Venditti's. In all three cases studied, the informal dimension allowed to reach a distinct result. Lehmann looks into the setting up of a European University, and how university rectors and vice chancellors affected the decision-making at the European level. Avril explicitly highlights how lawyers acted as intermediaries between the companies and the European administration in the field of competition policy. Finally, Venditti shows how the Assembly of the Western European Union allowed for a greater level of European cooperation in the area of aeronautics.

Other examples of this brokering dimension can be found in the historiography of European integration. Brown and Romano highlight the significance of informal contacts among diplomats in the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) negotiations.<sup>19</sup> Further to this, in a special issue of *Modern Asian Studies* they edited, Romano and Zanier stress the use of informal economic, cultural and political contacts to foster relations between Western Europe and Communist China in the 1950s, when Cold War imperatives hampered the official recognition of the People's Republic.<sup>20</sup> Most chapters in the volume edited by Kaiser, Leucht and Gehler on transnational networks in European integration, as well as most chapters in another collection edited by Kaiser and Meyer on societal actors in European integration, address the ability of informal actors and settings to act as an intermediary to a specific policy outcome.<sup>21</sup>

## *Democratic control and human rights*

Another point in common of some of the contributions is the endeavour of a number of actors to put greater emphasis on democratic principles, accountability, transparency, and respect of human rights. This appears in Steehouder and Van den Berg's joint contribution, as well as in Lopez Gomez' and Zamburlini's contributions. All three chapters connect the informality dimension to a process, broadly speaking, of democratisation and/or attention to democratic issues. Steehouder and Van den Berg look at opposition to the National Socialist order of Europe. Lopez Gomez delves into the Spanish transition to democracy, and analyses how the Spanish Federal Movement pressured the EEC together with the European Movement International not to accept an undemocratic Spain as a member. Zamburlini analyses the activism of three NGOs seeking to convince the EEC to include human rights in its foreign aid policies.

The informality of these three case studies looks much more apparent than in the previous 'brokering' dimension. Even if it is codified, the 'narrative of hope' on which Steehouder and Van den Berg insist clearly goes beyond the formal dimension of politics. The very nature of 'emotives', which they trace in the Freiburger Bonhoeffer-Kreis's memorandum on the future order of Europe, seems to prevent a high degree of codification since these are by definition largely subjective. The pressure of the European Movement is that of a transnational network that can use back channels. While it is a formal organisation, the European Movement does not have a formal place at the table of enlargement discussions and negotiations. A little bit in the same vein, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are no doubt formal organisations, but they often exist and act outside of the formal institutional framework. These last two cases indeed typically illustrate the point made by Roos and Neuhold in chapter 2 about where to find informality: in negotiations and agenda-setting.

Again highlighting the validity of this democratisation dimension, other such examples exist in the historiography of European integration. Karamouzi and de Angelis, in analysing how ‘democracy’ entered the discursive politics of the EEC, show all the pre-formal steps in that process.<sup>22</sup> It is true that their study focuses on formal EEC institutions (Commission, Council, and European Parliament), and on formal milestones (1978 declaration on democracy, 1993 Copenhagen criteria). But in so doing they also unearth the informal way these institutions used to reach such formal milestones. Petrini looks into democratising the work place, and more specifically at the European Trade Union Confederation’s (ETUC) role in the discussion about the devising of a Community regulation on workers’ rights from the early 1970s to the mid-1980s.<sup>23</sup>

#### *The development of new institutional practices*

The progressive development and build-up of new institutional practices is the last theme that transpires based on the contributions to this volume. How does informality contribute to processes of changing, weakening, or strengthening formal arrangements? In the two cases in question, the informal both tried to bypass, and to reinforce, the formal. Shehu’s chapter on the G7 shows how informality was at the origin of the meetings of the heads of state and government of the seven most industrialised countries, and how informality was a dimension that they aimed to nurture, in spite of the increasing formalisation of the summits. Looking at EU external relations governance, Schade underlines how the ambiguities of different EU Treaties play out in this field, and raise potential governance problems.

The institutional evolution of international and European banking regulation and supervision provides another good illustration of the interplay between formal and informal dimensions.<sup>24</sup>



Informal arrangements played an essential role in European, and indeed global discussions in this field. Debates about the future of the euro area in the late 2010s focus on the completion of the banking union. Yet the very first hints at the need to create what we would call today a banking union – that is, a harmonised set of rules for banks to operate in the EU – took place in the 1960s.<sup>25</sup> These debates initially occurred in informal settings. The very first group created among banking supervisors – the so-called *Groupe de Contact* – was created on purpose outside formal channels, in 1972, and was not part of the EEC institutional set-up.<sup>26</sup> The informal character of the group and of its debates was the first item discussed in the run-up to its creation. The *Groupe de Contact* so highly valued its informality that it strongly and successfully resisted attempts at being dragged into formal structures. When the European Commission suggested the creation of a new EEC committee gathering banking supervisors, the *Groupe de Contact* clearly rejected the idea of being transformed into that very group. Instead, another separate institution, the Banking Advisory Committee, was created in 1977.

What did this informal cooperation allow banking supervisors to do, that they could not do in a formal setting? First of all, the *Groupe de Contact* allowed banking supervisors to actually meet. Prior to the creation of the *Groupe de Contact*, no such forum existed where banking supervisors could discuss international and European supervisory issues, whether in a formal or in an informal setting. This is reminiscent of the creation of the European Council and the G7, which followed complaints from heads of government that there existed no regular meeting point for them on the European and international stage.<sup>27</sup> Secondly, the informality of the group allowed supervisors to share some information on a wholly confidential basis with respect to highly sensitive matters.

Based on the contributions to this volume only, these three categories – brokering, democratic control and human rights, and development of new institutional practices – further highlight the diversity of configurations and contexts where informality can be found.

### **The informal and the formal in the research agenda**

What conclusions can we draw from these observations in terms of possible future directions for researching the informal in the history of postwar European cooperation and integration?

A first element, if partly obvious, is that researching the informal dimensions is definitely a worthwhile endeavour. Whether we look at the informal following the typology sketched out by Roos and Neuhold, or through the lens of the tentative one I have developed based on the contributions in this volume, researching the informal is fascinating and rewarding. It is true that the versatility of informality as a concept and as an object of research can be a handicap: in many instances, the formal and the informal are not easy to distinguish in European cooperation and integration. It also remains to be seen, at least in my view, what has *actually* been missed by other authors who more often than not simply did not explicitly disentangle the informal and the formal in their analysis. The point stands, however, that explicitly looking for the informal by definition helps to qualify the focus, often excessive in the history of European cooperation and integration, on the formal, official, dimension of cooperation/integration.

Second, researching the informal certainly does not mean giving up on the formal. Many historians studied the informal in a research seemingly focused on the formal without claiming it. Conversely, the contributions in this volume show that looking at the informal can only be pursued when equally scrutinising the formal. As I have argued elsewhere in the

case of researching the transnational, the intergovernmental, and the supranational,<sup>28</sup> researching the informal should not be done at the expense of the formal. The categories of formal and informal are obviously antithetical; but they are not mutually exclusive. One can paradoxically reinforce the other; one can co-exist with the other. The challenge lies in reaching the appropriate balance in weighting the importance of the informal and the formal in postwar European cooperation and integration processes.

Third, researching informality should not be limited to clearly delineated policy areas or broad categories. Informality can be everywhere, and attempting to fit it in predetermined boxes can be useful for the sake of clarity, but should not be taken to mean that these categories are set in stone. The broad typology I outlined above reflects the common features of the chapters in this volume. And the categories outlined by Roos and Neuhold in chapter 2 reflect – as they themselves recognised – similar categories that any research on formal aspects would follow. Agenda-setting, decision-making, and implementation just reflect the regular functioning of any policy-making pipeline.

We are still missing pieces of historical work whose exclusive leading research question would be a specific type of informal integration: the impact of unplanned and/or behind the scenes encounters in the framework of different types of formal negotiations. Most case studies in this volume focus primarily on formal settings – such as NGOs, international institutions, and EU treaties – rather than on informal settings – such as behind-the-scenes negotiations. The hook, to put it more bluntly, remains formal, and the informal remains secondary. This is in fact symbolic of the fact that research is instinctively driven by a desire to explain formal outcomes, not informal, intangible ones.

What matters therefore is to articulate the significance of the informal in European integration explicitly, accurately, and systematically. It was good that Monsieur Jourdain eventually realised that there exists only prose and verse in writing. The new emphasis on the distinction between the formal and the informal should lead us to shed new light on European cooperation processes, instead of following Jourdain in his vanity for stating the obvious.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Molière, *The Would-Be Gentleman*, p.192.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter 1, p. xxx.

<sup>3</sup> Bederman: *Custom as a Source of Law*.

<sup>4</sup> Mourlon-Druol: *Steering Europe*.

<sup>5</sup> See for instance the analysis of multiple European Councils over the period 1975-1978 in *A Europe Made of Money*, and my analysis of the role of the European Council in European Political Cooperation (EPC): *More than a Prestigious Spokesperson*.

<sup>6</sup> Seidel: *The Process of Politics in Europe*, 80-81, 92-95, and 124-131 respectively.

<sup>7</sup> Milward: *The European Rescue of the Nation State*.

<sup>8</sup> Ludlow: *The European Community and the Crises of the 1960s*.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*: 81-83.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 163-166.

<sup>12</sup> Rollings & Kipping: *Private transnational governance*.

<sup>13</sup> Rollings: *British Business in the Formative Years of European Integration*.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*: 119.

<sup>15</sup> The pilot study can be accessed online at <https://www.cvce.eu/digital-innovation/projects/netviz/werner-networks> (Accessed on 19 June 2018). All quotes in this paragraph come from this study.

<sup>16</sup> Mourlon-Druol: *A Europe Made of Money*, see especially pp.177-183 for the group of three.

<sup>17</sup> Misa & Schot: *Inventing Europe*, 1. See also multiple volumes in the Palgrave Macmillan series *Making Europe: Technology and Transformations, 1850-2000*, and in particular Kaiser & Schot: *Writing the Rules for Europe*.

<sup>18</sup> See chapter 2 in this volume.

<sup>19</sup> Brown & Romano: *Executors or Creative Deal-Makers*.

<sup>20</sup> Romano & Zanier: *Circumventing the Cold War*.

<sup>21</sup> Kaiser et al.: *Transnational Networks in European Integration*; Kaiser & Meyer: *Societal Actors in European Integration*.

<sup>22</sup> Karamouzi & De Angelis: *Enlargement and the Historical Origins*.

<sup>23</sup> Petrini: *Demanding Democracy in the Workplace*.

<sup>24</sup> The above-mentioned case of the European Council would also fit very well in that category.

<sup>25</sup> Mourlon-Druol: *Banking Union in a Historical Perspective*.

<sup>26</sup> Goodhart: *The Basel Committee on Banking Supervision*, 12-25.

<sup>27</sup> Mourlon-Druol: *'Managing from the Top'*.

<sup>28</sup> Mourlon-Druol: *A Europe Made of Money*, concluding chapter.

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